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AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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February 4, 2005

TO: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley 
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – PIONEER BOYS
RANCH, FOURL AND OAK CROSSING GROUP HOMES**

We have completed a review of the Fourl and Oak Crossing Group Homes (Group Home or Agency) operated by the Pioneer Boys Ranch. Each Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Fourl Group Home is a six-bed facility, which provides care for children ages 13-18 who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Fourl Group Home was providing services for five Los Angeles County DCFS children.

Oak Crossing Group Home is a six-bed facility, which provides care for children ages 13-18, who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Oak Crossing Group Home was providing services for two Los Angeles County DCFS children and two Los Angeles County Probation children.

Pioneer Boys Ranch Group Homes are located in the Fifth District.

Scope of Review

The purpose of the review was to determine whether the Agency was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement. Additionally, the review covered basic child safety and licensing issues, and included an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, facility inspections, and interviews with two children placed in Fourl House Group Home and one child placed in

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

Oak Crossing Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with the residents were designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency, and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

Summary of Findings

Generally, the Agency was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement. However, the Agency needs to address various areas where improvements are needed.

Fourl Group Home

Fourl Group Home needs to make repairs to its facility; provide residents with a variety of age-appropriate books; create Needs and Services Plans that have detailed, measurable, and achievable goals; develop quarterly reports that appropriately focus on the goals noted in the Needs and Services Plans; and provide residents with the required minimum weekly allowance.

Oak Crossing Group Home

Oak Crossing Group Home needs to make repairs to its facility and provide residents with the required minimum weekly allowance.

Attached is a detailed report of the review findings.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. The Agency's management is required to provide a corrective action plan to the Children's Group Home Ombudsman within 15 business days from the receipt of this report. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me, or have your staff contact Mike Pirolo at (626) 293-1110.

JTM:MP:CC:asl

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS
Paul Higa, Acting Chief Probation Officer
Greg Iungerman, Executive Director, Pioneer Boys Ranch
Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**Pioneer Boys Ranch
Fourl House
24700 Fourl Road
Newhall, Ca 91321
Phone: (661) 259-6465
License No.: 191200019
Rate Classification Level: 10**

I. Facility and Environment

(Facility Based - No Sample)

Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Fourl Group Home (Group Home or Agency) is located in a residential community. The Group Home is clean, spacious, and comfortable. The Group Home is well maintained, nicely landscaped, and blends well with the other homes on the block. There were no observable safety hazards.

The interior of the Group Home is generally neat and clean. The décor provides a home-like atmosphere. The common rooms are nicely decorated and maintained. The resident bedrooms are spacious, comfortable, and personalized to each child's desire with posters, pictures, and knick-knacks. However, there are areas that need improvement.

In the residents' bathroom there are some missing tiles, and in the kitchen the oven is missing a knob. In bedroom number two, the mattresses are worn and sagging, and there is a hole in the bedroom door.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV, and a VCR. There are resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs. However, there is an insufficient amount of age-appropriate books.

There is a sufficient supply of frozen food, meat, canned goods, bakery items, and fresh fruit. The food is accessible, appropriately dated, and properly stored.

Recommendations

1. Pioneer Boys Ranch management:

- a. Replace the missing tiles in the residents' bathroom.**
- b. Replace the knob on the oven.**

- c. Replace the worn mattresses in bedroom number two.
- d. Repair the hole in the door in bedroom number two.
- e. Provide the residents with a variety of age-appropriate books.

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The residents meet the Agency's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Residents received a complete initial diagnostic assessment after being admitted into the Agency's program.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current. However, the goals are not realistic, measurable, and time specific. There was documentation to support the placement workers' participation in the development and update of the NSPs.

The quarterly reports are current; however, they do not appropriately focus on the residents' goals.

The residents are provided with psychological testing, and emotional and developmental counseling as required by the Program Statement. Case files reflect adequate documentation to show evidence of residents receiving regular individual and/or group therapy.

Recommendations

2. Pioneer Boys Ranch management:

- a. Create Needs and Services Plans that have realistic, measurable, and time specific goals.
- b. Develop quarterly reports that appropriately focus on the goals noted in the Needs and Services Plans.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Residents are attending school. Both records contain current semester report cards and/or progress reports for the residents. Residents reported that they are provided with a sufficient amount of daily educational stimulation away from school and feel that the Group Home is supportive of their academic progress.

The Agency's program includes the development of residents' daily living skills. The residents are involved in the planning and preparation phase of meals. Hygiene care is discussed as needed and employment preparation encouraged.

Residents are offered the opportunity to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Residents have the opportunity to work and manage their own money.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The Agency provides its residents opportunities to participate in recreational activities. The residents expressed satisfaction with the recreational activities and stated that the recreation schedules are followed.

The Group Home utilizes local community organizations for recreational and program resources. The residents reported that they participate in planning some of the activities. The residents have free time and are able to participate in self-selected activities.

Transportation is provided to and from the activities.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents for three case files

Comments:

The residents have current court authorizations for psychotropic medication. Documentation confirms that the children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment – Resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Residents expressed satisfaction with the Agency and its staff. Residents participate in an initial orientation and the Group Home's policies and procedures are posted. Residents reported that they feel safe in the Group Home and that there is no interference with their daily living functions.

Residents reported satisfaction with the taste of the food and with their ability to participate in menu development. They reported that there is sufficient staff supervision and expressed satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff.

Residents reported that they are assigned chores to complete on a daily basis that are reasonable and not too demanding. Residents are able to have visitors and make and receive personal telephone calls. They are permitted to contact their probation officers, attorneys, and family members as needed. Residents are able to attend weekly religious services of their choice and feel that the Agency is respectful of their cultural lifestyles. The Agency allows the residents to celebrate holidays.

Residents reported that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Residents are aware of their right to refuse medication.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The Agency provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and allowances to the residents. The Group Home supplies its residents with the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance and the residents are given the opportunity to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to residents is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Agency does not provide residents with the required minimum base allowance of \$3.50 per week. Instead, the residents receive a minimum allowance of \$2.00 per week, which they are able to increase according to the Agency's behavioral system. Residents are permitted to spend their allowances as they choose.

The Agency provides residents with adequate personal care items and adequate storage.

Residents are provided with regular opportunities to maintain photo albums/life books.

Recommendation

- 3. Pioneer Boys Ranch management provide residents with the required minimum weekly allowance.**

**Pioneer Boys Ranch
Oak Crossing
26541 Oak Crossing Road
Newhall, Ca 91321
Phone: (661) 259-6465
License No.: 197604256
Rate Classification Level: 10**

I. Facility and Environment

(Facility Based - No Sample)

Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: One (Two case files were reviewed but only one resident was available to be interviewed)

Comments:

Oak Crossing Group Home (Group Home or Agency) is located in a residential community. The Group Home is clean, spacious, and comfortable. The Group Home is generally well maintained and blends well with the other homes on the block. However, the backyard was barren, lacking grass and landscaping. There were no observable safety hazards.

The interior of the Group Home is generally neat and clean. The décor provides a home-like atmosphere. The common rooms are nicely decorated and maintained. The resident bedrooms are spacious, comfortable, and personalized to each child's desire with posters, pictures, and knick-knacks. However, there are areas that need improvement.

In bedroom number one, the screen door is torn and one of the under-bed drawers is broken. In addition, comforters on the residents' beds are worn and/or torn.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV, and a VCR. There are books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs.

There is a sufficient supply of frozen food, meat, canned goods, bakery items, and fresh fruit. The food is accessible, appropriately dated, and properly stored.

Recommendations

1. Pioneer Boys Ranch management:

- a. Landscape and maintain the back yard.**
- b. Repair the screen door and the drawer in bedroom number one.**

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- c. **Replace the worn comforters on the residents' beds.**

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: One

Comments:

The residents meet the Agency's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Residents received a complete initial diagnostic assessment after being admitted into the Agency's program.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current, realistic, measurable, and time specific. There was documentation to support the placement workers' participation in the development and update of the NSPs.

The quarterly reports for residents are current, comprehensive, and appropriately focus on the goals of the NSPs.

The residents are provided with psychological testing, and emotional and developmental counseling as required by the Program Statement. Case files reflect adequate documentation to show evidence of residents receiving regular individual and/or group therapy.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: One

Comments:

Residents are attending school. Both records contain current semester report cards and/or progress reports for the residents. The resident reported that he is provided with a sufficient amount of daily educational stimulation away from school and feels that the Group Home is supportive of his academic progress.

The Agency's program includes the development of residents' daily living skills. The residents are involved in the planning and preparation phase of meals. Hygiene care is

discussed as needed and employment preparation encouraged.

Residents are offered the opportunity to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Residents have the opportunity to work and manage their own money.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: One

Comments:

The Agency provides its residents opportunities to participate in recreational activities. The resident expressed satisfaction with the recreational activities and stated that the recreation schedules are followed.

The Group Home utilizes local community organizations for recreational and program resources. The resident reported that he participates in planning some of the activities. The resident has free time and is able to participate in self-selected activities.

Transportation is provided to and from the activities.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents for two case files

Comments:

The residents have current court authorizations for psychotropic medication. Documentation confirms that the children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment – Resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: One

Comments:

The resident expressed satisfaction with the Agency and its staff. The resident participated in an initial orientation and the Group Home's policies and procedures are posted. The resident reported that he feels safe in the Group Home and that there is no interference with his daily living functions.

The resident reported satisfaction with the taste of the food and with his ability to participate in menu development. He reported that there is sufficient staff supervision and expressed satisfaction with the quality of his interactions with staff.

The resident reported that he is assigned chores to complete on a daily basis that are reasonable and not too demanding. The resident is able to have visitors and make and receive personal telephone calls. He is permitted to contact his probation officer, attorney, and family members as needed. The resident is able to attend weekly religious services of his choice and feels that the Agency is respectful of his cultural lifestyle. The Agency allows the resident to celebrate holidays.

The resident reported that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

The resident is aware of his right to refuse medication.

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There are no recommendations for this section.

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Comments:

The Agency provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and allowances to the residents. The Group Home supplies its residents with the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance and the residents are given the opportunity to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to residents is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

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The Agency provides residents with adequate personal care items and adequate storage.

Residents are provided with regular opportunities to maintain photo albums/life books.

Recommendation

- 2. Pioneer Boys Ranch management provide residents with the required minimum weekly allowance.**